Picturing the Border Exhibition Opens at the Cleveland Museum of Art

Thursday July 18, 2024

Untitled [Undocumented worker holding Huelga flag at United Farm Workers Demonstration, El Mirage, Arizona], negative 1978, printed 2016. Louis Carlos Bernal (American, 1991–1993). Digital inkjet print; 40.6 x 40.6 cm. Collection of the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Louis Carlos Bernal Archive. © Lisa Bernal Brethour and Katrina Bernal

Download the Press Kit

Contact the Museum's Media Relations Team:
(216) 707-2261
marketingandcommunications@clevelandart.org

Photographs from the 1970s through the present day tell a story through the lenses of border residents and Latinx, Chicano/a, and Mexican photographers

CLEVELAND (July 18, 2024)—Featuring more than four dozen photographs, *Picturing the Border* aims to spark vital conversations of what constitutes citizenship, as well as complex negotiations of personal identity as it relates to the border. Through these images the exhibition shows that Latinx, Chicano/a, and Mexican photographers have significantly rethought what defines citizenship, nationality, family, migration, and the border beyond traditional frameworks for decades.

Opening on July 21, 2024, in the Mark Schwartz and Bettina Katz Photography Gallery, this free exhibition will be on view through January 5, 2025. From intimate domestic portraits, narratives of migration, and political demonstrations to images of border crossings and clashes between migrants and the US Border Patrol, this one-of-a-kind exhibition presents photographs taken by both border residents and outsiders, many of whom are Latinx, Chicano/a, and Mexican, and tells the story of the US-Mexico borderlands from the 1970s to the present.

“Borders have long been spaces of contention,” says Nadiah Rivera Fellah, curator of contemporary art. “The mainstream media in the United States tends to present nationalistic narratives about imminent threats at the border. This reductive and divisive narrative does not often portray the identities, languages, cultures, and social ties among communities. The photographs featured in this exhibition tell a different story that can serve as a counternarrative and timely new perspective on life in this region.”

The earliest images in *Picturing the Border* form an origin story for the topicality of the US-Mexico border at present and demonstrate that the issues of the border have been a critical point of inquiry for artists since the 1970s. In addition, they showcase artists who were ahead of their time in presenting ideas about spaces and exclusion as they relate to issues of the borderlands and Latinx identities in the United States.

Exhibition Catalogue

A beautifully illustrated 134-page exhibition catalogue accompanies *Picturing the Border* by Nadiah Rivera Fellah, curator of contemporary art, with contributions from Natalie Scenters-Zapico.

The US-Mexico border has undergone dramatic changes over the past six decades, becoming increasingly industrialized, urbanized, and militarized, especially in the aftermath of 9/11 and the War on Terror. Mainstream and conservative news coverage has often reinforced or exacerbated such developments, characterizing the border as out of control and describing migrants in derogatory terms, in the process fueling xenophobic sentiment.

A foil to this reductive and dehumanizing narrative, this presentation of Latinx photography offers more nuanced portrayals of life in the borderlands. Ranging from the 1970s to the 2020s, images by Louis Carlos Bernal, Graciela Iturbide, and Laura Aguilar, as well as emerging artists such as Ada Trillo, Guadalupe Rosales, and Miguel Fernández de Castro display alternative photographic vocabularies regarding place, identity, and race. With subject matter spanning from intimate domestic portraits and youth counterculture to border crossings and clashes involving the US Border Patrol, this richly illustrated volume also features scholarly essays and new work by *fronteriza* poet Natalie Scenters-Zapico, providing new insights on this fraught and misunderstood region.

Complementary Programming

Virtual Lunchtime Lecture

The Vibrancy of Family Life: Louis Carlos Bernal's Work with Color

Ana Perry, assistant professor of modern and contemporary art at Oberlin College
Friday, October 1, 2024, 12:00 p.m.

Free; Ticket Required

Come to the CMA for a quick bite of art history. Every first Tuesday of the month, join curators, conservators, scholars, and other museum staff for 30-minute talks on objects currently on display in the museum galleries.

This talk explores how Louis Carlos Bernal implemented a highly saturated color photographic practice to emphasize the creativity, styling, and vibrancy of domestic life within the Mexican American neighborhoods of the Southwest. Looking specifically at his images *Nanita Mendibles, Barrio Anita* and the color contact sheets of *Lubbock, Texas*, this talk will highlight how Bernal's use of color film, rather than exclusively black and white film, was a powerful choice to feature the individuals behind the aesthetics that define Mexican American neighborhoods.

MIX: Bailamos
Friday, October 4, 2024, 6:00–10:00 p.m.
Ames Family Atrium
Ticket Required

Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month at MIX: Bailamos, an evening combining Hispanic music, food, and dancing. Northeast Ohio band Ropa Vieja performs their signature blend

of Latin American hits from a range of styles including salsa, bachata, merengue, and reggaeton. Themed food and cocktails provided by Bon Appetit.

Magos Herrera
Wednesday, December 11, 2024, 7:30–9:00 p.m.
Gartner Auditorium
Ticket Required

Born in Mexico City and currently based in New York City, Magos Herrera is a dazzling jazz singer-songwriter, producer, and educator declared as "one of the greatest contemporary interpreters of song" by the Latin Jazz Network. With a sultry voice and an unparalleled presence in the contemporary Latin American jazz scene, she is best known for her eloquent vocal improvisation and her singular bold style, which embraces elements of contemporary jazz with Ibero-American melodies and rhythms in a way that elegantly blends and surpasses language boundaries. Featured as one of the most creative Mexicans in the world by *Forbes* magazine, throughout her career, Magos has garnered important awards and recognitions, including a Grammy short-list nomination in the Best Jazz Vocal Album category for her album *Distancia* (2009), and received the Berklee College of Music's Master of Latin Music Award. In March 2023 she performed as part of the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women at UN headquarters to celebrate the power of creative activism, innovation, solidarity, and resilience, as well as the leadership of women while humanity faced the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Herrera is a spokesperson for UN Women for UNiTE, a campaign to end violence against women campaign, and for HeForShe, a promoter of gender equality. Herrera is the recipient of a 2020 Chamber Music Americas New Jazz Works Award, 2021 South Arts Jazz Road Creative Residency, and a 2022 Cafe Royal grant. She is also on the faculty of Mannes School of Music at the New School in New York.

The Fran and Warren Rupp Contemporary Artists Lecture

In Conversation: Zoe Leonard, Guadalupe Rosales, and Josh Franco
Saturday, December 7, 2024, 2:00 p.m.

Gartner Auditorium

Free; Ticket Required

Capitalizing on the prevalent issues of the border today, the CMA exhibition *Picturing the Border* aims to spark vital conversations on migration, displacement, as well as complex negotiations of personal identity as it relates to the border.

Join artists Zoe Leonard and Guadalupe Rosales, and art historian and artist Josh Franco as moderator, as they discuss their own artistic approaches to the intersection of identity, community, politics, and their connection to the spaces of the borderlands.

All exhibitions at the Cleveland Museum of Art are underwritten by the CMA Fund for Exhibitions. Principal annual support is provided by Michael Frank and the late Pat Snyder, the Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation, the John and Jeanette Walton Exhibition Fund, and Margaret and Loyal Wilson. Generous annual support is provided by two anonymous supporters, Gini and Randy Barbato, the late Dick Blum and Harriet Warm, Gary and Katy Brahler, Cynthia and Dale Brogan, Dr. Ben and Julia Brouhard, Brenda and Marshall Brown, Joseph and Susan Corsaro, Richard and Dian Disantis, the Jeffery Wallace Ellis Trust in memory of Lloyd H. Ellis Jr., Leigh and Andy Fabens, the Frankino-Dodero Family Fund for Exhibitions Endowment, Florence Kahane Goodman, Janice Hammond and Edward Hemmelgarn, Robin Heiser, the late Marta and the late Donald M. Jack Jr., Eva and Rudolf Linnebach, William S. and Margaret F. Lipscomb, Bill and Joyce Litzler, the Roy Minoff Family Fund, Lu Anne and the late Carl Morrison, Jeffrey Mostade and Eric Nilson and Varun Shetty, Tim O'Brien and Breck Platner, William J. and Katherine T. O'Neill, Michael and Cindy Resch, William Roj and Mary Lynn Durham, Betty T. and David M. Schneider, Paula and Eugene Stevens, the Womens Council of the Cleveland Museum of Art, and Claudia Woods and David Osage.

The Cleveland Museum of Art is funded in part by residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture.

This exhibition was supported in part by the Ohio Arts Council, which receives support from the State of Ohio and the National Endowment for the Arts.

###

About the Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) is renowned for the quality and breadth of its collection, which includes more than 63,000 artworks and spans 6,000 years of achievement in the arts. The museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and performing arts and is a leader in digital innovation. One of the leading encyclopedic art museums in the United States, the CMA is recognized for its award-winning open access program—which provides free digital access to images and information about works in the museum's collection—and free of charge to all. The museum is located in the University Circle neighborhood with two satellite locations on Cleveland's west side: the Community Arts Center and Transformer Station.

The museum is supported in part by residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and made possible in part by the Ohio Arts Council (OAC), which receives support from the State of Ohio and the National Endowment for the Arts. The OAC is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally, and economically. For more information about the museum and its holdings, programs, and events, call 888-CMA-0033 or visit cma.org.